

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0062

DIA

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 10626

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

LONDON FOR LAMBRAKIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS PINS LE IS

SUBJ: LEBANESE-ISRAELI BORDER INCIDENTS

1. NEWS OF TWO FEDAYEEN ATTEMPTS IN PAST THREE DAYS TO MOUNT CROSS-BORDER "SUICIDE"RAIDS INTO NORTHERN ISRAEL (FBIS TA131300 AND ISRAELI RADIO BROADCASTS SEP 4), COMBINED WITH LATEST REPORTS OF ISREALI GROUND INCURSIONS INTO LEBANON (DAO BEIRUT 567), SEEM TO INDICATE INTENSIFICATION OF FAMILIAR PATTERN OF PROVOCATION/REPRISAL TO A LEVEL WE HAVE NOT WITNESSED FOR SOME WEEKS. ALTHOUGH IDF FORTUNATELY APPEARS TO HAVE INTERCEPTED AND ABORTED BOTH OPERATIONS BEFORE THEY CAUSED ANY CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

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(DESPITE FEDAYEEN CLAIMS TO CONTRARY), FACT THAT TWO

ISRAELI SOLDIERS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN KILLED IN SEP 4
CLASH WILL CERTAINLY NOT BE VIEWED WITH EQUANIMITY IN TEL AVIV.

2. THERE SIGNS, NOT TOTALLY CONCLUSIVE, THAT PLO
HIGH COMMAND MAY HAVE GIVEN GREEN LIGHT TO RESUMPTION OF
FEDAYEEN CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS. (ALTHOUGH PLO "FREEZE"
ON SUCH OPERATIONS REPORTED BEIRUT 7543 DID NOT SHUT OFF
FEDAYEEN RAIDS FROM LEBANON COMPLETELY, FACT REMAINS THAT
HOSTILE GROUND ACTIIVITY ON PART OF LEBANON- BASED FEDAYEEN
HAS BEEN RELATIVELY LIGHT IN RECENT WEEKS.) FOR EXAMPLE,
SO-CALLED "POPULAR STRUGGLE FRONT" WHICH CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY
FOR SEP 2 OPERATION (FBIS TA031300) MAY IN
FACT BE COVER-NAME FOR FATAH, SINCE WE KNOW THAT PSF
FORMERLY LED BY BAHJAT ABU GHARBIYAH HAS BEEN MORIBUND FOR
SEVERAL YEARS. IN ADDITION, HAWATMEH'S PDFLP, WHICH TODAY
ANNOUNCED RESPONSIBILITY FOR SEP 4 OPERATION, HAS DEVELOPED
CLOSE TIES WITH FATAH AND BECOME MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO CONTROL
BY 'ARAFAT AND CO.

3. WE NOTE THAT LATEST FEDAYEEN CROSS-BORDER RAIDS COINCIDE
WITH UNUSUALLY FRENETIC PLO PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN TO CLAIM
CREDIT FOR ALL SORTS OF DERRING-DO WITHIN ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED
TERRITORIES (E.G., FBIS L032213 AND TA0212100) AND WITH CONCERTED,
WELL-PUBLICIZED PROPAGANDA EFFORT IN SUPPORT OF
PLO MOVE TO INSCRIBE PALESTINIAN ISSUE AS SEPARAATE ITEM ON
29TH UNGA AGENDA. OUR INTUITION THEREFORE SUGGESTS THAT NEW UPSURGE
IN FEDAYEEN BORDER ACTIVITY MAY BE DESIGNED TO HELP FOCUS
GREATER ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION ON CONTINUING
PALESTINIAN "STRUGGLE", THEREBY ENGENDERING GREATER POPULAR
ARAB SYMPATHY FOR PALESTINIAN CAUSE. SUCH TACTIC IS
TIME-HONORED PLO DEVICE FOR PRESSURING CERTAIN ARAB LEADERS
(E.G., SADAT) TO ACCORD UNWAVERING SUPPORT TO FEDAYEEN AT
TIMES WHEN LATTER FEAR SUCH SUPPORT MAY BE FLAGGING.
GODLEY

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